



January 5, 2016

NH Site Evaluation Committee  
Pamela G. Monroe, Administrator  
21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10  
Concord, NH 03301

RE: SEC Docket #2015-02

Dear Honorable Committee,

The New Hampshire Sierra Club (NHSC) represents over 10,000 members and supporters in the state of New Hampshire. Founded by legendary conservationist John Muir in 1892, the Sierra Club is now the nation's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization – with more than two million members and supporters. Our successes range from protecting millions of acres of wilderness to helping pass the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act. More recently, we've made history by leading the charge to move away from the dirty fossil fuels that cause climate disruption and toward a clean energy economy.

As Chapter Director of the New Hampshire Sierra Club Chapter, I write to the New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee in support of the Antrim Wind Energy Project and further support your efforts as a deciding body to determine the merits of the proposal as NHSC sees them.

The Antrim Wind Energy Project is a proposal to build 9 wind turbines in the town of Antrim in the area from Tuttle Hill to Willard Mountain for 28.8MW of clean renewable energy. The developer states that the wind farm will produce enough pollution-free energy for 12,000 average New Hampshire homes.

*The Sierra Club's members are over 2.1 million of your friends and neighbors with over 10,000 in New Hampshire. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Sierra Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.*

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NHSC supports Antrim Wind because:

1. Climate impacts in New Hampshire: The climate trends in New Hampshire and around the globe are shifting. We are seeing more severe and frequent weather events – from high intensity microbursts and longer periods of higher temperatures without any precipitation. 2015 broke records every month of the year with hot temperatures. In New Hampshire, these trends held true and the effects are showing. This fall and early winter without snow cover put the moose population in the Granite State at risk because the moose tick will thrive during the calving season devastating the next generation of moose. The warming temperatures in the Gulf of Maine are resulting in the entire collapse of the shrimp population. The lack of rain in the spring of 2015 sent local farmers from the fields into greenhouses to grow vegetables. Public health impacts are expected to put the most vulnerable at the most risk. But the solutions to these risks are known – switching away from fossil fuel to clean forms of energy, like wind power.
2. Pollution Free Power – Wind power does not threaten our public health with air and water pollution. Wind power does not leak deadly carbon monoxide into our homes, like Freedom Utilities residential pipeline service in Keene, NH. Wind power does not spill into our rivers and streams leaving toxic sludge and expensive litigation, like the Canadian tar sands oil disaster in Mayflower, Arkansas. Wind power does not require massive amounts of water for heating or cooling from rivers, like Merrimack Station, the coal burning power plant owned by Eversource in Bow, NH. Wind power does not produce millions of gallons of coal ash that are stored in old manmade lagoons nearby our vulnerable drinking water sources, like the coal ash pools that spilled in North Carolina’s Dan River. Wind power does not put entire neighborhoods at risk of breathing emergencies for the young and old vulnerable community members, like the coal plant set for retirement in Bridgeport, Connecticut near schools where children with asthma are ten times more likely to die from an asthma attack than other asthmatic children in Connecticut. Wind power of this scale does not require massive infrastructure build up that require ratepayer increases, like

the proposed Northeast Energy Direct pipeline and compressor stations or Eversource-Northern Pass-Hydro Quebec international transmission superhighway.

3. Wind power does not emit carbon dioxide or threaten to make climate change worse. It is an alternative to help alleviate climate impacts we see in New Hampshire and around the globe.
4. Wind power means local jobs. They build them here and they hire here. 15,000 to 20,000 workers in New Hampshire are employed at clean tech companies installing wind, solar and biomass systems<sup>1</sup>.
  - a. From a recent DOE report: “The U.S. retains the world’s top spot for total wind energy produced and delivered to consumers (181 billion kWh for U.S. and 156.3 billion kWh for China in 2014). Nationwide another report finds that “the success of the U.S. wind industry has had a ripple effect on the American economy, supporting 73,000 jobs related to development, siting, manufacturing, transportation, and other industries<sup>2</sup>.”
  - b. Also from the DOE report: The United States now has enough installed wind energy capacity to power over 17.5 million homes.
  - c. Again from the DOE report: Wind power represented 24% of U.S. electric-generating capacity additions in 2014.
5. Wind energy lowers costs: Wind energy is one of the lowest cost energy sources in America. Currently, across the country wind power costs less than 3 cents per kilowatt hour. For perspective, the average kilowatt hour rate in New Hampshire in December 2015 is over 16 cents.
6. Local public support: Repeatedly the Antrim Select Board has voted and written in support of the wind proposal. In state and national polls people want utilities to shift away from fossil fuels for cleaner and safer energy

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Martin, Wind Energy Foundation, CARBON PRICING WORKS: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE TO LEAD ON CLEAN ENERGY; pg 29.

<sup>2</sup> Dept of Energy report prepared by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory called: 2014 Wind Technologies Market Report Highlights August 2015; <http://energy.gov/eere/wind/downloads/2014-wind-technologies-market-report>

sources<sup>3</sup>. Over the years, local polling has shown that voters want decision makers to support climate solutions, like pollution-free power. The Antrim Select Board has been consistent in their support over the years.

7. Proposal addresses concerns: This is not an unreasonable project when considering the changes the developer adopted in response to opponents' complaints. There are fewer turbines. They are smaller and quieter. There is more conservation land under easement agreements than ever in the immediate area of Willard Mountain. The project presents many benefits to the immediate community, as well as, our state and international efforts to lower the threat of climate change.
8. The project was first proposed in 2012 but was not approved by the NH Site Evaluation Committee. This new proposal eliminates many controversial elements of the original proposal by recognizing the visual impacts of the turbines to the recreational users of nearby Willard Pond by a doing a few things. First, the developers eliminated the turbine closest to the pond completely. They also lowered the height of the remaining closest turbine so that it is less visible from Willard Pond and therefore less visually impactful. The developer also switched the turbines so that they are quieter by 5 decibels than the standard recommended by the World Health Organization of 45 dB(a) to any and all nearby homes. The project will also utilize local labor contractors and local workers who will be paid equitably for their skills. Last, though not the least important to this environmental organization, the Antrim Wind Energy proposal includes an unusual land easement agreement of over 900 acres for environmental protections abutting the leased land. Not only are the visual impacts less, the noise impacts less, and, the labor local, this proposal includes more land protection agreements than any other in New Hampshire. For every one acre of land needed for the project, just over 15 acres will be protected.

The scale of this project is exactly what environmentalists endorse for small, local and manageable power sources that create less climate and visual impact, lowers costs, creates local jobs and improves public health. In a world of global

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<sup>3</sup> Yale Polling Data shows 64% support in New Hampshire for utilities to deliver 20% clean renewable energy, <http://environment.yale.edu/poe/v2014/>

commitments to address climate disruption to improve public health, create new job opportunities, apply new technologies and promote cleaner air and water, please submit these comments from NHSC on the Antrim Wind Energy Project to Site Evaluation Committee docket number 2015-02 for your consideration.

With great respect to the Site Evaluation Committee's directive and thoughtful review, please contact NHSC if you deem necessary at the number listed.

Sincerely,  
Catherine M. Corkery  
NH Sierra Club Chapter Director

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